

Community Support and Services Committee

From: Debbie Bailey [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 18 August 2021 5:07 PM
To: Community Support and Services Committee
Subject: Response to inquiry into social isolation and loneliness Queensland

Momentum Mental Health – About Us

Momentum Mental Health was established in 1996 under the name of Toowoomba Clubhouse. Over the years, the service has evolved and is now leading the way in contemporary mental health and wellbeing programs.

We deliver psychosocial support in a coaching style that uses a strength-based approach to help you build capacity, confidence and get you back in the driver's seat of your own wellbeing and recovery.

We deliver services on behalf of State and Federal government funded programs and work with people who have severe and persistent mental illness through to people wanting to build their resilience and wellbeing.

A Whole of Community Wellbeing approach to address Social Isolation and Loneliness

The topic of Social Isolation and Loneliness links very closely to current discussions and focus of work around Wellbeing in the Toowoomba community.

Momentum Mental Health is currently collaborating with a group of service leaders with the view to develop, fund and deliver a blueprint for a whole of community wellbeing plan.

The local Toowoomba community is well serviced and has many organisations that work in homelessness, mental health, education, volunteering, health, government, multicultural, migrant and refugee communities, sport, housing, business and research and evaluation, and all are grappling with the challenges of their own sectors. There are multiple providers in all of these sectors, all working to improve homelessness, mental health, reduce social isolation, address loneliness. However, while the efforts of these groups and agencies increase, the issues remain and the challenges don't appear to be getting smaller.

The siloed, scattergun approach, while well-meaning and addressing some of the "now" issues, does not work as a long term solution. 20 + years of this model has demonstrated it's ineffectiveness to change the tide of these challenges.

We believe action that will effect real, sustainable change requires a coordinated approach where all service providers and key players are delivering services in line with a united vision, there is commitment to adjust services to work toward this vision and the services actively respond to evidence around community needs and feedback.

Social Isolation and Loneliness relationship to Wellbeing

Our view is that a person's level of social isolation and loneliness is directly linked to their wellbeing. With this in mind, we consider social isolation and loneliness can be a symptom of someone who is languishing or has low mental wellbeing. See [Wellbeing-First-Report-DIGITAL.pdf \(gamh.org.au\)](#) This symptom does not equal a mental illness. Low mental wellbeing can be improved without medical intervention as evidenced by successful wellbeing programs such as 5 ways to wellbeing [5 Ways To Wellbeing - Five Ways To Wellbeing Australia | Home](#)

We believe, in order to see sustainable, positive change in social isolation and loneliness, there needs to be a whole of community approach, but not just with a focus on loneliness or social isolation (or mental health or homelessness etc). The whole of community approach needs to be around Wellbeing.

In addition to this, a whole of community approach needs to be owned and driven by the community. It can't be an initiative by one agency or a government program. It needs to have an agreed vision from the community, buy in from all sectors and an evaluation and measurement program that links back to services to help inform them and their future programs and efforts (ensuring they meet the needs of the community, not just their organisation's vision).

The outcome we expect from development and delivery of a whole of community wellbeing blueprint approach is to provide a strategic focus and guide for organisations in the community to work together to deliver services that are more coordinated, impactful and in turn, more able to have a positive influence on wellbeing in the community.

The strategic focus can also provide clear direction for government investment and service provision on what the priorities are for the community – because the community has created the vision and mandated it.

Measurement of impact around Social Isolation and Loneliness

There are strong bodies of evidence around grass roots, community led responses that have a positive impact on loneliness and isolation. Some of the work guiding our research and development of a community wellbeing blueprint include the following resources:

Community Wellbeing Monitor is a Community Services Framework developed as a strategic guide for the City of Charles Sturt as part of its work to build community wellbeing.

This measurement tool focuses on three key areas: Connected; Engaged; Healthy, Active and Safe and uses wellbeing indicators (linked to local data sources) to gauge the wellbeing of the community. https://www.charlessturt.sa.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0028/158626/Community-Wellbeing-Monitor.pdf

5 Ways to wellbeing is another successful, grassroots, evidence based program that was developed out of peer review research and continues to be measured to have a positive impact on connection, resilience and wellbeing in communities. [5 Ways To Wellbeing - Five Ways To Wellbeing Australia | Home](#)

Wellbeing First is a future state document by the Queensland Alliance for Mental Health that describes the need, opportunity and a vision for the community mental wellbeing sector. [Wellbeing-First-Report-DIGITAL.pdf \(qamh.org.au\)](#)

Mackay-Isaac Region Suicide Prevention approach (Real Mates Talk) is another leading example of whole of community approach that is having a positive impact on wellbeing in this Queensland community.

Why Social isolation and loneliness is a whole of community issue

Social Isolation and loneliness underpins whole of community challenges including suicide prevention, wellbeing, connection in the community etc – a whole of community blueprint approach would bring these silos together so all agencies and services wanting to address these issues are able to focus their efforts in a strategic, coordinated (non-scatter gun) way

Further benefits of a whole of community approach are that this style could:

- Reduce the numbers of round tables and forums and become a central repository for information and strategy that's been agreed by the community
- Share community wide measures and feedback – all parts of the community could use results of the feedback and measures to circle back, change their own practice or approach to better meet the community need (ensuring all efforts are moving toward what the community has identified it wants/needs).
- Bring prevention to the forefront of the conversation – rather than focus on acute, medical interventions, communities can work to build resilience and connectivity. In time, this investment in prevention can build and should start to stem the increases needed in medical and acute services.



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Follow us: 

We have exciting news! From 1 July 2021 we are changing our name from Toowoomba Clubhouse to become Momentum Mental Health. Same locations, same contact numbers but we will have a new look and updated email addresses.

We acknowledge the Traditional owners of the land on which we meet, work, and live. We acknowledge the elders past and present and the care they have given to this country. Momentum Mental Health gratefully acknowledges the financial and other support from the Australian Government Department of Health, Queensland State Government and its private donors. If you would like to donate please visit our website.



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